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Jungermann and Shiner: Entire issue

STUDENT ART AND LITERARY MAGAZINE

TYGR

2017-2018





Olivet Nazarene University
One University Ave
Bourbonnais, IL 60914

The Department of Art and Digital Media
in conjunction with
The Department of English

COVER: **THE NIGHT SKY** PHOTOGRAPH ANDREW GEIGER

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

The Tygr Literary and Art Magazine has been in production since 1989, unifying the worlds of art and literature into one publication. The Tygr has grown and changed with the years and its many iterations. This year, the Tygr has changed once again with the implementation of digital submissions for works of both art and literature. This has been an exciting time for us, the staff, because of the new ease of access that digital submissions allow for artists, writers, and our reviewers. We are also seeing a new unity between the art and literary sides of the Tygr.

The Tygr has always existed to blend the worlds of art and literature, but this year, it was our goal to emphasize the unity between the two departments and the cohesion that can exist between visual form and the written word. We chose the theme of unity to recognize the efforts and progress made by our artists, our writers, our faculty advisors, and our staff to create a beautiful anthology of work where the imagined lines and divisions fade.

The following pages of poems, paintings, photographs, and stories are the result of countless hours of work by writers and artists on Olivet's campus. We hope you enjoy their work and reflect on the unity that binds together the pages, the work, the artists and writers, the staff, and you, the readers.

"How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity!"
- Psalm 133:1 (NIV)

Sincerely,
The Editors



Luke Jungermann and Hannah Shiner

TYGR

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The Tyger

William Blake

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? And what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what funace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

VISIONARY
PHOTOGRAPH
CATHRYN SCHWEGEL

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The Cool and The Sacred

By: Kiley Bronke

Paris in May is 75 and cool.
Tourists wait in line: a pool, of rustling feet.

They gawk
at each cool, disinterested Parisian they long to meet,
holding begets,
smoking cigarettes.
The pool becomes anxious, restless
To flood the cathedral floors.

A plane shoots by, high
in the cool Parisian sky,
unattuned to the plight of man,
scratching at the doors with singular plan.

The tsunami crashes,
showing the policeman their passes
into the damp, dark cathedral.

The cool city is left outside its walls.
Crossing the threshold, an important man stalls.
The ocean of sacred history, of quiet, engulfs

Each
Insignificant
Water
Drop.

CITY FAIR
WATERCOLOR
EMILEE FRENCH

Queen of the Mountains

By: Jayden Radillo-Pettit

The mountains are so bright, you know?
Right here, inside my mind.
They are studded with emerald trees and
crowded with jasper earth
And crowned with crystal snows.
They are beautiful though far
and I want to build my home up there
then I'll become a soft pink jewel
to decorate the topaz trail.
I dream about their precious points
and about their pristine air.
A log cabin will do just fine
and a sweater to keep me from the chill.
I shall climb their thickly wooded slopes and scale
their rocky faces. I will live in peace and quiet then,
far from
the clutter of people, hidden in those lonely places.
But I have a quest, a journey now. I'll never see
those slopes again.
I must travel all around the world and get to know
new places.
New faces.
But when I die
and I am buried, I'll live within those mountains
Forever
 Peaceful
 Dreaming
 Floating
 Flying
Alas, I will be happy within the jasper earth
covered with emerald trees
and crowned with crystal snows.
At last.
The Queen of the Mountains.



HIRAETH
PHOTOGRAPH
JESSIE KILBRIDE

Rain

By Isabelle Napier

You asked me why I loved the rain. And all I said was that it was “cozy, romantic, and invigorating.” I left out so much. I love rain because of the way it makes the earth smell, and for the way it sends people scurrying into coffee shops and houses. I love rain for the way it washes out the day, like laundering it into something fresh and new. I love rain for the way it is unpredictable—it may start as a drizzle, then turn into a quiet shower, caressing the earth, and then whip up into a perfect storm, driven by lightning and thunder. Rain is never angry. Storms, even if they are fierce, are not full of hate but of passion. Rain is just the romance between the sky and the earth. In the rain, I am washed, too. With my feet on the ground, and my face towards the sky, all the love and freshness and life that is being poured down flows over me. And when I am inside, it as if the rain is singing a gentle song, making my cup of tea a little cozier, my blanket a little warmer, and my eyes a little heavier as it taps its gentle song through the window pane, lulling me to sleep. Life has never been about who you dance with in the sunshine, but who you run to in the rain. I am not looking for someone to ride with into the sunset, but someone to curl up with, head on chest, in the rain. Rain always promises something new. It’s the shift in the atmosphere between two normals. It is the clashing of of two environments, and the herald of change.

GARDENER'S ENTRYWAY
WATERCOLOR
TORI FOX

Sun in the Hollow

By Kate Kettelkamp

today the same sun rises,
but its light reaches new places.
even the darkest corners of your heart
might have the dust blown out
by a gentle wind of kindness
and the sun will reach there too.
should it not,
the rain will roll in
soak your heart to its soul,
wash it clean
wash it ready
for the sun to shine again
and warm your deepest hollows
as you rise up tomorrow.

SUN IN THE TREES
PHOTOGRAPH
ANDREW GEIGER

The Stars Above Us

By Michael Jorgensen

A holy city in the sky, a canvas painted brightly.
The gaps of Heaven's peeking eye, unveiled to
us nightly.

A midnight show in multitude, a portrait
etched in time.

Crafted by an artist's hands, an artist of divine.
But hence a troubled audience, with backs
turned in the dark.

Creating a calamity, with light and fire and
spark.

And a burning of the souls of life, in nature's
chamber hide.

Would we even notice, if the stars above us
died?

BIG BEN
PHOTOGRAPH
HANNAH SHINER

Misfit Home

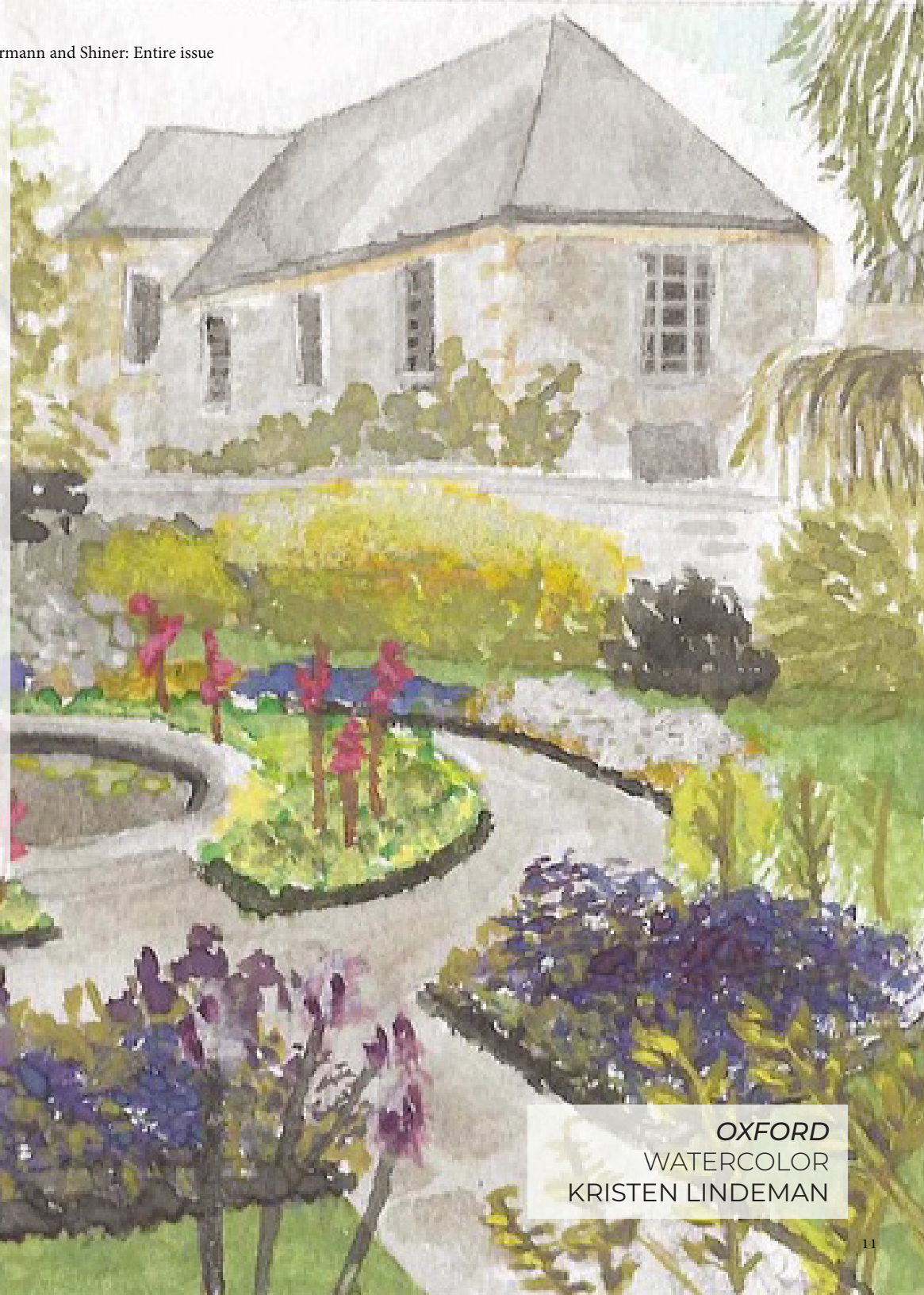
By Kelsie Davis

The theater is a misfit home
For all to come and see.
For those of you who feel alone,
You can come here and be.

For all to come and see
The plot; a treasure hunt.
You can come here and be
Anyone or thing you want.

The plot; a treasure hunt
To search and find the truth,
Anyone or thing you want
Either elder or the youth.

To search and find the truth
For those of you who feel alone,
Either elder or the youth
The theater is a misfit home.



OXFORD
WATERCOLOR
KRISTEN LINDEMAN

Wires

By Kiley Bronke

High school was for braces,
For sparse dates to dances

that wouldn't ask
and never tell, only mask

that they weren't going to ask you
another fact you already knew:

that it's not about the braces
or the times you could go back, the places

you wouldn't go
people, you'd never know.

Cause after you'd get them removed,
they'd start to move,

and the games you engaged
had everything to do with the bargains you waged

when you'd smile
and force it to be seen for a high school hallway mile.

INTRO

PHOTOGRAPH
MELISSA HOMMAN

As the Bee Above the Flower Hovers

By Eric Steffen

As the bee above the flower hovers,
So I look for faith.
To taste the sweet nectar the flower uncovers
To finally feel safe.
As the salmon upriver stubbornly swims,
So I find my way.
To reach the place where he begins
But never seems to stay.
As the mother bear protects her young,
So I guard my thoughts.
Kept within, ambitions go unsung -
And unspoken, forgot.
As the aged wolf leaves the pack to die,

So I often feel.
That last howl, a forlorn cry
Of the nihilist's desperate appeal.
As the birds above repeatedly fly south,
So I wrestle with inconsequential things.
And in wrestling, not shutting my mouth
When might silence understanding bring.
As the bee above the flower hovers,
So I am doomed to be.
The dive required to discover
Is what is stopping me.

BEE
PHOTOGRAPH
RACHEL SEDGWICK

Foresight

By Luke Jungermann

Tim was driving home when he saw the future. He saw the red light that he'd run through and the semi-truck that would rip him and his car from existence. Policemen, firemen, and paramedics would all arrive, but there would be no point. Tim would end up having very little resemblance to a human body.

His daughter would arrive last, to the hospital morgue, all the way from New York to claim his misshapen form. Why did she come? Why is she crying? She would still have fresh needle marks on her arms and dark circles under her late mother's eyes. There would be a funeral, simple and brief. The minister would accurately sum up Tim's life and accomplishments in a few short sentences. His daughter would be there in black jeans and jacket and would hardly ever take her eyes off his casket. She would go back to New York afterwards, to her basement room that smelled of stale cigarettes. She would hold her needles and cry but never use them.

Instead, she'd throw them out, down the storm drain outside her door.

Tim saw her at the rehab center, at the church meetings, at the night classes, and at the small graduation ceremony. He saw her at his grave, all grown up in her new yellow dress, with tear-coated cheeks and shoulders heavy with remorse but eyes full of hope.

"I'm sorry," she'd say.

Tim smiled.

And when he came to the red light, he didn't stop.

UNTITLED
ACRYLIC
CICI NIENHUIS



A Tree-Hugger's Eulogy

By Eric Steffen

We are not alone here.

A tree has life, as me and you.
And though it may not know
Whether it lives or dies,
We do.

We see the beauty in its growth and decay,
And in this I hope we see each day:

The sky serene
The tree's true green
And nothing can compare,
To the fall of leaves
In the playful breeze
And their dancing in the air.

We are not alone here.

Products of imagination in creation.
We think, and think we're higher,

LUCY
MIXED MEDIA
BRIANNA ROSE

Place ourselves above our station.
I and the bird, the squirrel and bee
Are all meant to enjoy the tree.
The shade it provides
And the shelter it hides.

We are not alone here.

We tear down trees
For buildings to build,
We box in nature
For our boxes to fill,
We tamper with climates
Because we want control,
And in our neighbors covet,
Give us more, give us more.
The cycle is vicious, momentous,
And always going round.
It won't be broken
If we refuse to make a sound.
Look outside, see the leaf.
Take one, as a token
And carry in it your belief
That all nature is dancing,
As the wind gives her rhythm,
We join in enhancing
This wonderful system

We are not alone here.

And if we use and abuse
This beautiful thing,
If we take for granted what we can do
Over what we should do,
And forget to change our views,
Pretty soon we won't have anything.

And this isn't a tree.
It's the coal, the water, the glaciers.
It's the oil, the copper, the sweatshops, and
slavers.
It's freedom, responsibility, humility, justice.
It's equality for all, not just us.
And it's also a tree.

We are not alone here.

We are in the system, a part of the whole.
Called to take care of this world, from pole to
pole.
And when we farm, we grow,
At times we harm, but know,
If our goal is good—
Intentions pure,
Our past may be unclean
But rest assured,
We can make again pristine.
It's not too late,
Don't leave this to another
Or chalk it up to fate.
And so I ask sister, brother,
Who am I?
Who are we?
God's creation, His Stewards:
Humanity.

Stains

By Isabelle Napier

She has lipstick on her teacup
And fire in her soul
There's a smile on her face
But her mind is very full

She has tear stains on her pillow
And bloodstains on her skirt
There are ink stains in her fingers
From the pens that bleed her hurts

She is every inch a woman
But with a sword worn at her side
The world is hard and needs her softness
But she must fight to stay alive

PROFILE
INK
DENISE CASALI



We Trees

By Aubrey Thompson

Guys always go for flowers.
Their colors and petals are magnetic.
They are the fresh pastels of Spring
And lively brights of Summer.
Their petals are soft,
Their petals are delicate,
Their petals dance
With the aria of a gentle breeze.

No man goes for trees.
We bear the scars of harsh Autumns
And relentless Winters
That the flowers could not endure.
Our trunks are rough and grooved.
We tower over the slight, fragile flowers.
Our colors are mute.
We sing not the aria of innocent flowers;
We are the deep, soulful voices
Of the Earth itself.

We are the virgin mothers
Of Nesting Robins
That build their cribs on our outstretched arms;
Of Graceful Owls
That find sanctuary in the hollows of our hearts;
Of Playful Squirrels
That feed upon the fruits of our spirits.

We take upon our shoulders
The brunt of every storm
And comfort our sweet babes—
Tell them not to fear the thunder.
We stifle the scorching rays of Sun.
We breathe life into all around us.

But the men wage war
On our selfless bodies.
They tear us apart,
Cut us down,
And feed us to the fire.
They destroy us
To build their dwellings.
Why do they kill us
To construct mere houses
When what we offer
Is not an empty frame
But a home?

They do not understand
That the curves of our trunks and branches
Are not made for the flirtations of flowers,
But for a pure and sacred love.
Our devotion is not blown about
By the winds of infatuation like the flowers—
They allow themselves
To be swept away at the first breath
That flutters their silk petals.

Not we trees—
For we trees choose our passions.
We trees have deeper roots.

FEET
PHOTOGRAPH
HANNAH SHINER

Evening Sky

By Kelsie Davis

Paint me a picture of how
the evening sky dances with
the color of you.

You rise and sink with yellows and pinks
and clouds cause pauses in the purples and blues.
And as you move,
it surrounds you.

CANYON COLORS
PHOTOGRAPH
JACOB ARNOLD



Vocation

By Kate Kettelkamp

They asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up,
and I said, "a teacher"
because I didn't know how else to say,
an inspirer,
a challenger,
a shaker, a mover,



a firm believer in the hope of the next generation.
I didn't think I could answer,
"a revolutionary"
because revolutionaries don't have salaries,
even though they're paid in change.
And optimists don't have health benefits,
other than lifted spirits.
Dreamers have no job security,
apart from the world's endless need for dreams.
They asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up,
and I said, "a social worker"
because I didn't know how else to say,
an advocate,
a peacemaker,
a counselor, a friend,
a voice for the silenced and oppressed.
I didn't think I could answer
"a liberator"
because liberators don't have vacation time
in the endless fight for freedom.
And crusaders don't have life insurance,
even though they're on the front lines.
Empowerers don't have 401(k) plans,
but will always see returns on their investments.
So finally,
when they asked me what I wanted to be when I
grew up,
I said, "a writer,"
and I still didn't know what to say
to make them understand,
but I had a pen.

SLEEPY BOY
WATERCOLOR
TORI FOX

The Art of Blooming

By Kyra Blair

I find roses to be the most beautiful
Of all the flowers that the Lord has created.
They are delicate,
They represent all that is good in the world.
And they, too, began as tiny seeds in the soil.
They grew with time
With sunlight
With care.
They blossomed from the ground
And sprouted into a life that is
Abounding
Fruitful
Full.
If roses have the ability to bloom from nothing,
Then, darling, so do you.



BUDDING PLANT
PHOTOGRAPH
AMBERLY WHITE

Up in Smoke

By Valerie Seehafer

After finishing a long day of work,
Igniting your breath seems to do the trick.
Usually after a meeting with a clerk,
And lighting you up with only a flick
You burn slow so I can breathe you in deep,
Tasting flecks of your skin fall on my tongue
I know the cost of your pleasure is steep,
But I'd rather die slow than to be hung.
Though I remove parts of you after use,
And throw you away after I am done
I alone suffer from any abuse
And in the end, it is you who have won.
Bought and sold based on what somebody craves
Yet in the end, we are the ones enslaved.

AFFLICTION
MIXED MEDIA
RACHEL THOMPSON

Whisper

By Tyler Chapman

I listened to the storm,
I listened to the hurricane,
I listened to the earthquake,
I listened to the rain.
I listened to the roar,
I listened to the hissing snake,
I listened to the chirp,
I listened to the screeching drake.
I listened to the strings,
I listened to the sounding drums,
I listened to the horn,
I listened to the saxophones.
I listened to the trucks,
I listened to the racing cars,
I listened to the bus,
I listened to the rewing charge.
I listen to all these noises,
I listen to this spinning twister,
I listen to all the sounds,
but miss what came in a whisper.



SNOW SCENE NO. 1
WATERCOLOR
EMILEE FRENCH

Overtime

By Rachel Hughes

The faux leather chair squeaks mockingly
As ticking hands
Expire promises,
Turning them into echoed apologies.

What happens when
working to put food on the table
means eating alone at a desk?
What happens when
windows in the coveted corner office
turn out to all be mirrors?
What happens when
weathered hands caress more keys
than loved ones' cheeks?

Incandescent bulbs and elevator buttons
Shine brighter than a billion stars.
The sky is obsidian;
Yet the city does not sleep.

NARROW
PHOTOGRAPH
AMBERLY WHITE

Ersatz

By Demetra Strain

The evening was quiet, quaint. Activity seemed to freeze in the chilling winds of November. I stretch my arms out and along the park bench, relaxing my neck as I gaze directly into the drops that fall. Beauty is a matter of perspective and while I'm constantly avoiding the impulse to flinch, watching as the world sends shots at you is the pinnacle of beauty. Everything is calm besides the constant pittering of rain. I feel my chest grow cold as water slips underneath my clothing, my stomach wanting to repel from its touch. I refuse to let my body do what it wants, closing my eyes to take in every breath of rain I can.

The world feels motionless, yet I feel as though I'm spinning in the stillness. A cold blanket now coats me, my clothes no longer protecting my skin from each drop of rain. Instead, I swim in the feeling, relishing the tiny pin drops across my chest. Everything but the rain has gone still, silent. Not a soul wanders the park, every rodent returned to their nest to wait the storm out.

But not I. Here I will sit for its duration. Here I will take in every breath of rain I can. It's funny how despite the human body being built waterproof, humans still acquire special garments to bypass it entirely, as if touching it will hurt you. I'm not afraid of that anymore, for there's something much more terrifying that leaves me longing to embrace it.

My legs begin to shiver and I force my mind to disconnect from them entirely.

I gaze above me towards the leaves that fail to protect me, only providing more of a waterfall than anything else as their shape crumbles beneath the weight. Their color is already beginning to fade, the pigments gradually becoming more dead with time. How a tree can shed its leaves and slumber for a season astounds me. I wish I could sleep, ignore the lives of others and disappear behind my eyelids for months at a time.

My teeth chatter and I grow impatient, trying to snap them shut, yet they refuse to obey. The strength within me begins to crumble, and I feel my soul eroding, tears finding their way down the sides of my face.

I love this rain. If anything has to kill me, I'm glad it will be this.

As if a response to my request, the storm above bellows out deeply, bringing forth an even heavier downpour than before. What felt like delicate pricks become bullets in my skin, each touch pressing down harder than the first. My body quivers uneasily. I no longer try to fight it, I can't any longer. My feet tense up suddenly, fritzting about rapidly then falling completely numb. The feeling climbs my legs, waves of paralysis encompassing me.

Here I will die, here I will take my final breaths, and I have no regrets. I am no longer adept to live on this world. I have no other choice but to leave it.

My fingertips begin the frenzy now, and while my body becomes growingly consumed in the electrifying heat, I grow curious to see. I draw my focus to my hand that now rests melting onto the park bench.

My knees expose deeper wiring within, smoke escaping from gaping holes. They decorate my entire body now, a large chasm taking place in my stomach where a pool of water began to form. But I feel nothing, just the rain against my face as I slowly erode away.

I am not human. I was never meant to be a real human, and though I cry knowing my end is near, I'm okay with this. I'm okay with this.

I feel the pressure on my face grow heavy, burning me viciously. I can't help but scream, I know I'll be okay, I know I'm only doing what's right, but to go before I become any more human will be the ultimate saving grace. Even as I melt into nothing but sparks of lingering electricity, I know that nothing hurts more than the heartbreak experienced by humans.

It kills them, and I would rather be taken out by the rain.



TRANSIENT
PHOTOGRAPH
JESSIE KILBRIDE

The Couch

By Luke Jungermann



His wallet was next.

Sam reached his car before realizing it was gone. His hands went to his back pockets, then the front ones, then to the back ones again. Going back inside his tiny apartment, he found the pants he wore the previous day and went through those pockets as well, back, then front. Next were the dresser drawers where he pulled out every sock and pair of underwear and carefully removed the small black jewelry box, placing it on his bed, and mentally pictured where he last had it, before moving onto the next drawer. Three more drawers and a closet later, still no wallet. He put everything back to where it was before, making sure he put the engagement ring in his pocket where he could always know where it was.

His watch read seven thirty. He was supposed to have picked up Lilly twenty minutes ago. She'd be angry, but she'd smile again in a few minutes in that perfect expression. He went to his neighbor's door and knocked once, then again, then again. Ms. Valerie came to her door on the fourth knock, and Sam asked to use her telephone again. His phone had been gone for a month now, and he had to learn of his father's illness from Lilly. After making the pitiful S.O.S. phone call, he thanked Ms. Valerie and went back to his apartment, sitting down on his old grey couch.

The couch itself was ugly as hell, but oddly enough, it was the centerpiece of the room. His dirty kitchen was to the right of the door with a sink filled with grimy dishes from the night before and a refrigerator loud enough to be heard from two floors above. He'd gotten complaints. In-between the kitchen and the sad excuse for a living room was a small table with

two chairs and couple of candles. He and Lilly had bought it together from a Walmart for ten dollars because Lilly was tired of having dinner on that musty couch in front of the television. He knew she hated his place, but she was too perfect to say so. Instead, they talked about their future and one day buying a house together. Sam sighed and leaned back into the couch, sinking and sinking and relaxing.

Lilly arrived ten minutes later in her yellow Volkswagen, wearing a blue dress and a white, sympathetic smile. When she saw him, she wrapped her arms around him, and he buried his face into her warm neck.

"What am I going to do with you?" She wasn't angry or frustrated, and Sam loved her for that.

"Looks like you're paying tonight."

She ruffled his hair and smiled, and they drove off in her car.

* * *

Sam always kept an old rabbit's foot on his car keys. His father had given it to him before Sam went off to college, saying that with it, he'd ace all his classes, graduate in four years, and maybe meet the right girl along the way. He'd only been right about the last bit. Sam rubbed his thumb up and down the rabbit's foot once again, this time in his living room wearing a black suit, waiting for Lilly to pick him up on the way to the cemetery. She'd promised to come all the way up to his apartment to get him so that she'd be with him the whole way. So he wouldn't be alone. But right now, he was alone. And all he could think of was his old, dirty couch. Putting his keys back in his pocket, he shuffled over to it and plopped down onto its soft cushions.

Sam could still remember eight years ago when

It was even softer then and lacked the many stains that now littered the fabric. His father had bought it for Sam to use at college so he'd have some place to relax and unwind. Of course, Sam had taken that to mean a place to sit back, be lazy, and forget about classes.

There was a knock on the door. Lilly came in, and she held his hand all the way to the car. The funeral was long and dreary. Dark rain clouds filled half the sky but were quickly replaced by the sharp blue tint of open air. Sam was disappointed. He liked the clouds. They reminded him of the camping trips he and his dad would take when Sam was younger. They always planned to spend their day outside, fishing or hunting, but every time there was some sort of rain storm that forced them into their tents to spend the day reading, joking, and laughing. Sam liked those trips much more than the clear ones.

The service ended abruptly, and people began to wander away. Lilly stayed with him, her hand still firmly in his.

"We can stay as long as you want, honey," he heard her say.

He looked down at the fresh rectangle of dirt then up at the now clear sky. The dark clouds were gone. Sam reached into his pocket for the rabbit's foot, to rub it one more time and then lay it to rest with his father, but it was gone. And so were his keys.

* * *

Sam was silent the whole way home. Lilly apologized multiple times and promised to help him search for the foot. Sam remained quiet and still, deep in thought, coming to grips with the decision that would change his life, a change his father would approve and be proud of.

When they got to the apartment, Sam sat down with Lilly on that worn couch. He took her hand into his and looked into her eyes.

"Lilly." She already started to smile. "I've been thinking about my life lately. I've been...thinking about the future. Our future. You're the only thing I've got left in this world, and I'd like nothing more than to spend our future together. I want to leave everything else behind."

She wiped a tear from her cheek.

"So...I've got a question to ask you..."

Slowly, his hand moved into his pocket to pull out...nothing.

"No," he whispered under his breath.

He checked his other pocket. Nothing.

"No. No. No."

He checked his back pockets, then his jacket pockets. Still nothing.

"No!"

Tears rolled out from his eyes like a trickling stream until he leaned forward and hung his head in his hands. It was his fault. It was all his fault. Everything was gone: his phone, his wallet, his keys, his ring. His father. He hated his apartment. He hated his low-paying job. He hated his television. He hated his couch. And he hated himself.

Softly, like a warm breeze on a spring day, Sam felt Lilly's hand on his shoulder, then her other hand, then her head. Hugging him, she uttered the only word that felt right: "yes."

He lifted his head and saw her smiling her perfect smile. He didn't hate her. He loved her, and after that, nothing else seemed to matter. He'd sell his apartment. He'd sell his television. He'd sell his couch. They'd start a new life together. A new day.

* * *

A few weeks later, Sam sold his beat-up couch to a couple of college kids across town. He gave them a good bargain for it. Thirty dollars for the whole thing, including everything they'd later find inside: a cell phone, a wallet, a set of keys with a rabbit's foot, and a diamond engagement ring still in the box.



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